

acknowledge that a mistake has been made. It would be the same way of acknowledging if the degradation of other religions were to occur and many voices would rise. Why not admit that the cartoons were degrading of a religion. It did not show the appreciation of religion and, in fact, we can all do better.

We have a respect for each other's differences, and we join together in harmony and world peace. I would ask the Danish Government to stop hiding behind the first amendment or at least the premise of free speech and deal with the question of religious diversity and appreciation.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

GUNS IN THE WORKPLACE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, in the last year the gun lobby has continued to defy common sense by pursuing a radical agenda in Congress and in State legislatures. Last year Congress passed legislation to give the gun industry unprecedented immunity from litigation and other legal action.

Thanks to this new law, dishonest and corrupt gun dealers will be held accountable for their negligence. Almost 2 years ago, Congress let the ban on assault weapons expire, and this year's budget cuts bullet-proof vest grants for police departments. Congress is allowing criminals to better arm themselves, and now the budget is taking away protection from our police officers.

But sadly, the gun lobby isn't done defying common sense with legislation. The NRA is currently lobbying for States to prohibit employers from banning guns on their private property. It does not matter if someone works in a school, day care center, bar, or even a facility that produces hazardous materials. The NRA wants to let them come to work with a loaded gun in their car.

In fact, the NRA is suing companies who ban guns in the workplace. Let us set the record straight here. I have no problem for a legal citizen to be able to purchase a gun. But allowing loaded guns in day care centers, parking lots, that does not make sense. Right outside of chemical plants, again, makes no sense. This is a recipe for disaster.

The NRA and its allies say that workers bringing guns to work and leaving them in their parked cars makes for a safer workplace, but they never explain how. Last month, an ex-employee of a post office in California opened fire at a mail processing plant, unfortunately killing six people.

Having loaded guns in cars outside the facility has not saved one life. In fact, I cannot think of a single workplace shooting that could have been prevented by loaded guns being kept in company parking lots. But I can think of numerous scenarios that would make a shooting more likely with guns on the premises.

What happens when a criminal learns that parked cars, often left unattended, contain loaded weapons? What is stopping them from breaking into cars and using those guns for crimes? Criminals break into parked cars to steal stereo speakers. They would not hesitate to take a loaded gun. What if an employee brings his or her gun into their place of work. A gun could be misfired or end up in the hands of someone else.

Worse yet, somebody who isn't legally allowed to own a firearm could gain access to a co-worker's gun. Studies show that guns are already the third greatest workplace safety hazard, behind vehicles and heavy machinery.

In fact, 17 people are killed by guns on the job each week. A study done by the University of North Carolina revealed that killings are five times more likely to occur at job sites where guns are allowed in workplaces than where they are prohibited. The NRA has targeted State legislatures for this ridiculous campaign.

The Florida legislature is considering making it a felony for employers to ban workers from having guns on the company property. Similar laws have passed in Alaska, Minnesota, and Oklahoma. I fear it is only a matter of time before they bring their cause before Congress.

Fortunately, the business community has rallied against the NRA on this matter, and for good reason. Businesses know that if they fire someone, who is to say that person is not going to go out into the car and get their gun and come in and try to do the mayhem against an employer. Are they going to have a safe room for someone that has been fired to go there? The liability costs are going to also be involved in private companies.

Also, layoffs and firings are a tough reality in today's economy. How will companies handle giving employees bad news when they may have loaded guns in their cars? Seems to me the latest initiative of the NRA creates a lot more problems than it solves.

Mr. Speaker, instead of being a rubber stamp for the NRA in 2006, let us focus on laws that keep guns out of the hands of criminals and terrorists. It is time for common sense, not misguided extremism.

SIMPLIFIED USA TAX, SUSAT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, tonight I would like to talk about our current Tax Code and its dis-

content, a tax system that has stifled economic growth, has encumbered our resources and miles of red tape and needlessly burdened working Americans.

Our Tax Code is too complicated and is riddled with obvious inequities. It punishes savings and investment, reducing economic and job growth; and it burdens domestic industry struggling to remain competitive.

As a member of the Ways and Means Committee, I have long advocated a tabula rasa approach to the Tax Code, a complete overhaul grounded in first principles. Our objective must be to replace the current antiquated tax system with one that can sustain a free capitalist society in the 21st century. That means a Tax Code that is simple, fair, and stable.

The new Tax Code I have developed, the Simplified USA Tax Act, or SUSAT, puts the right incentives in place to grow our economy and ultimately raise our standard of living. In fact, many of the provisions included in my bill were recommended by the President's advisory panel on Federal tax reform as part of their growth and investment plan.

My proposal has three key components. First, it simplifies the code by a factor of about 75 percent. Second, it takes the taxes off of savings to promote thrift and avert a national savings crisis. Third, it makes America significantly more competitive, thereby creating better jobs within our borders.

The Simplified USA Tax starts out with just three simple low rates: 15 percent at the bottom, 25 percent in the middle, and 30 percent at top. Through a payroll tax credit to all wage earners, SUSAT effectively lowers the income tax rates to about 7 percent to 17 percent for nearly all Americans.

Under my proposal, and this is one significant departure from the President's panel recommendation, everyone gets a deduction for the mortgage interest on their home. In addition, the SUSAT tax allows charitable donations and tuition deductions. To further ensure that the new Tax Code would be progressive, my proposal also permits all families to take a generous family credit and qualifying families to take an additional refundable work credit. These two credits simplify and improve the current child credit and earned income tax credit.

I believe the Tax Code must also give Americans a fair opportunity to save part of their earnings. By taking the taxes off of savings, we will increase the savings rate and ultimately reduce the cost of capital.

My proposal encourages savings by allowing everyone to contribute to an unlimited Roth IRA. It also repeals the individual and corporate alternative minimum tax, Federal death and gift taxes. Mr. Speaker, as you can see, the individual tax system, under my proposal, is designed to be much simpler than the status quo.